Using #5 Old Flashbulbs and A Canon “Speedlite” With a Kodak 828 “Flash” Bantam Camera

Having a ***Kodak “Flash” Bantam*** camera that took 828 film sort of intrigued me. Yeah! I know that 828 film is not available any longer, however, 828 film is really 35mm film in width, just without the sprockets. I have re-rolled panchromatic film onto 828 spools - (*See a different article about that.*) This time, I have some leftover cuttings from my 120 and 220 X-Ray film experiments, which are a little over the width of 35mm film, so I cut that leftovers into 35mm strips to use in the Kodak “Flash” Bantam camera. I knew that I would have to use ***“backing papers”*** from used 828 film spools. And as the backing paper is labeled and marked with numbers for each of the eight exposures, I did not have to make “locator” sprocket holes - I can just stop advancing the film when I saw the numbers in the “*little window*” on the back of the camera. This article is how I did this. (*BTW= The backing paper WILL wear out after many uses - I cut Black opaque 4mil Plastic strips and numbered the areas of the intended exposures.*)

The Flash Bantam has f-stops and shutter speed adjustments - unlike the simple “point & shoot” that I used in the other article, thus, making it perfect for the use of X-Ray films.

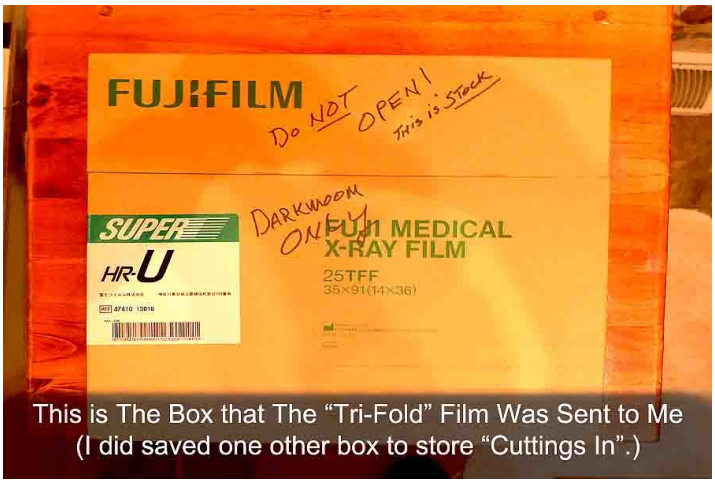
The first thing to do is the cutting of the leftover film strips to a 35mm width and proper length. This is one of the easiest things to do as with the film I am using (***Fuji HR-U “Tri-Fold” Film (ISO rated at 50***)), plus you may work with this film under a good RED safelite in a darkroom area. Which is very good, as it is impossible to do accurate cutting in total darkness - with any film.

Materials needed are - a “*guillotine*” paper cutter (*or a good paper trimmer*) with good visible ruled lines. On the cutting board, I have placed tape at “*Key-Locations*” for various sizes of films as well as papers. Small scissors for lite trimming. Cellophane tape. Some pre-cut black Opaque Plastic strips longer than the film that is cut. A perminate “Paint Marker” - (*I use a bright silver one*). And soft cotton gloves to handle the film without scratching it.
(***Oh Yeah! - a box of X-Ray film.***)

Before opening the box of X-ray film, make sure that your Safelight is truly "***SAFE***". I did this by using a scrap part of the intended X-ray film. Lay it out flat on the counter with some coins on it in various places. Then leave it exposed to the safelight of the darkroom area. After a time of 15 minutes, develop the film as you would the Exposed Film of latent images. After development in the same developer you will use for the process, carefully observe if there are any areas of questionable "defects". The film should be totally clear.

Now you are ready to begin cutting the film.

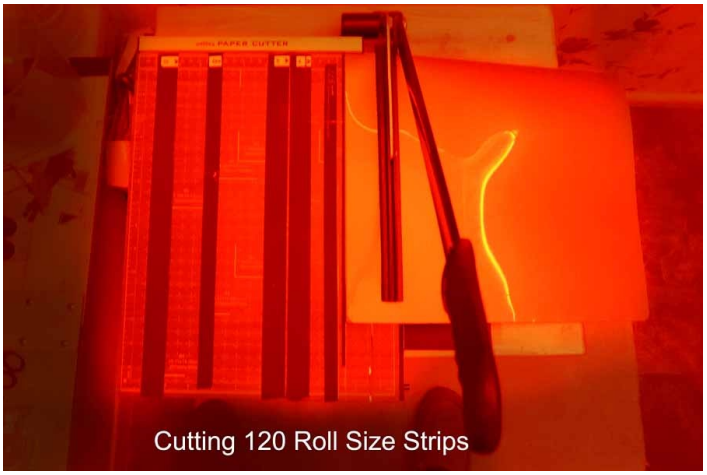
While your eyes are adjusting to the dim red light, arrange things where you know where they are, and can see in the darkroom conditions.



This is The Box that The "Tri-Fold" Film Was Sent to Me
(I did saved one other box to store "Cuttings In".)

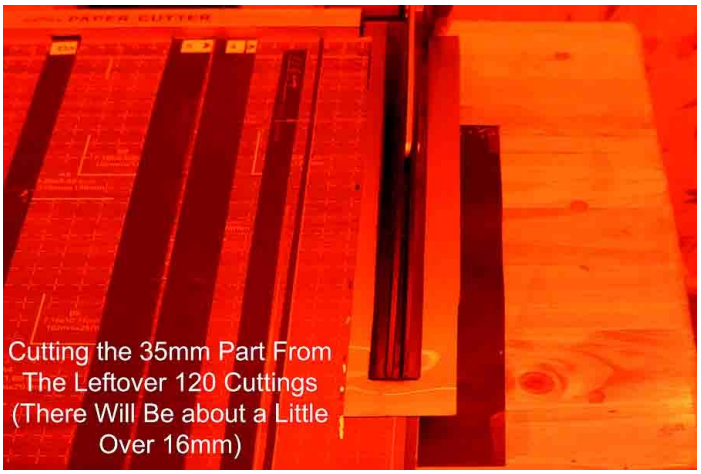
Unfolded Fuji HR-U "Tri-Fold" X-Ray Film
14"X36"
(Cut this as Folded - Too Large For Most Cutters)

I am currently using ***Fuji HR-U "TRI-FOLD" Film***. This comes with 25 folded sheets to a box of 14"X36" - (*I bought this on eBay for 60 USD + shipping.*) When you are about to cut the 120 Strips to use in a Medium Format camera, ***DO NOT*** unfold the film. Just measure by placing the edge of the film sheet at point you have placed tape on the cutting board.

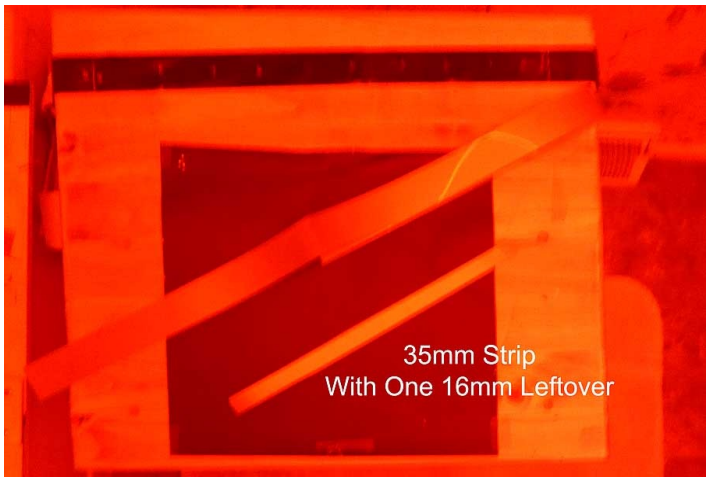

Cutting 120 Roll Size Strips

From One Sheet of Tri-Fold Film
You Can Get Five 120 Strips for Rolling.
(The Leftover Will Be Cut Again for 35mm Size)

After cutting one sheet of this folded 14X36 - you will have enough for 5 rolls of 120, and One scrap part leftover to re-cut to 35mm strip to make two 828 eight exposure rolls.



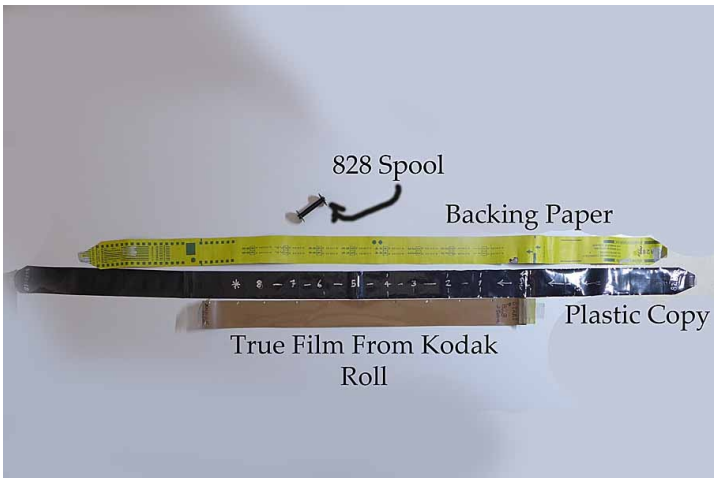
Cutting the 35mm Part From The Leftover 120 Cuttings (There Will Be about a Little Over 16mm)



35mm Strip With One 16mm Leftover

What is left will be one small part about 16mm in width. (*OK - I did give it one second of a thought of keeping it, and began to have thoughts of buying a Minnox "spy" camera and use that 16mm part instead of tossing it away - Naa! I tossed it.*)

With the films now cut, you may begin the task of rolling them onto five 120 spools and two 35mm (828) spools. (*I shall not go into the rolling of the 120 spools, as I have covered that in a previous article. And this paper is about the use of 35mm cut X-ray film to use in a Kodak "Flash" Bantam (828) camera*). Why? = Because I have one and in that 828 film is not manufactured currently - Nor - is it going to be ever brought back on the market.



Two 35mm Strips Ready To Roll Onto 828 Spools And Two Black Plastic Backing Leaders

With a Marker ID the Areas Exactly of Exposure onto The Black Plastic Backing As to Where the Number of Frames Are and Tape the Film to the Reverse Side

By following common sense one may accomplish this task without too many problems. I might warn anyone giving this a try that it does require some penance, effort, and persistence. Because the X-ray film is very "springy" and twice the thickness of true photographic film. Also - The width of the Black Plastic backing ***MUST*** be a little over that of the 35mm film to ride up onto the inner sides of the spool shoulders. However - it can be accomplished.

Begin (**while still within the Darkroom Environment**) with taping the film to the underside of the Marked Plastic Backing at a line where the film would begin on the backing paper of the original 828 roll. I do hope you saved the spools from the film that you acquired on eBay, or another source. Go to the ***EXPOSED*** end of the plastic backing and insert it into the large slot through to the smaller slot. This holds the film when rolling. When you get near the films end, slowly feed the ***untaped*** end of the film into the "pinch-point" where the backing meets the film and roll for two turns. Then pull the film tight - and continue, stopping from time to time to inspect as to how the alignment of the backing is covering the film and going on in a good even manner. When you get to the Beginning of the film - where you have taped it to the plastic backing - give the backing a good snug pull to secure the plastic to the shoulders of the spool, and complete the roll. Tape securely and fold over a small corner of the tape so to make an area for removing when loading into the camera.

Exposure / Daylight & Flash.

With this project I had a Kodak #5 flashbulb attachment and the proper electrical fitting (***ASA Bayonet***) to go into the camera's "sync-port" connection. *It is the old style type, that is not available - except from acquiring used flash holders*. The #5 and #5B bulbs can be found on eBay as well. Also, I made a prototype attachment bracket to mount both the #5 unit and a Canon 580 "Speedlite" strobe. The wiring to the Bantam was done with another "old-style ASA" sync cord spliced and wires soldered together, each insulated with shrunk tubing. (See photos on previous page.)

Normal outside light - No Flash.

The above positives were from Fuji HR-U X-ray film of ISO 100 From the Kodak "Flash" Bantam 828 (35mm) camera / Exposure was f-8 @ 1/50th.

#5 Clear Flashbulb-

Above^ Straight On Direction

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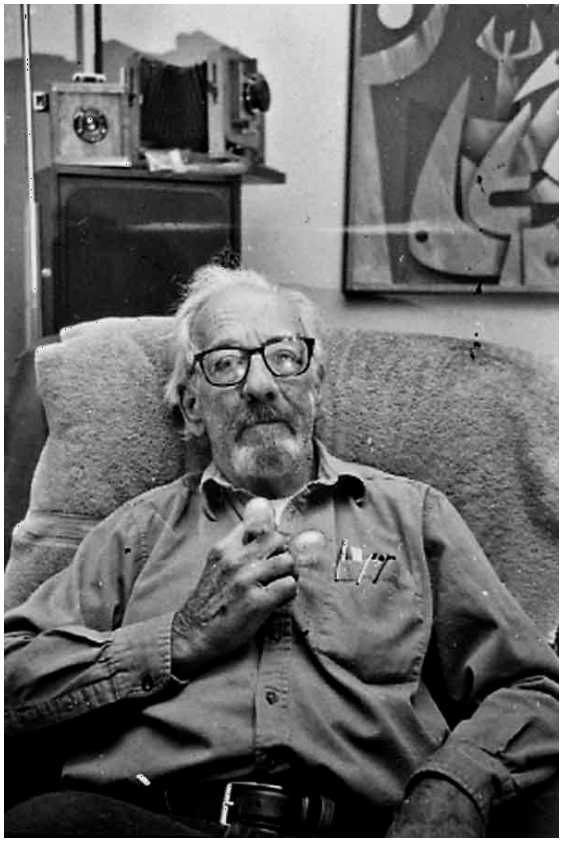
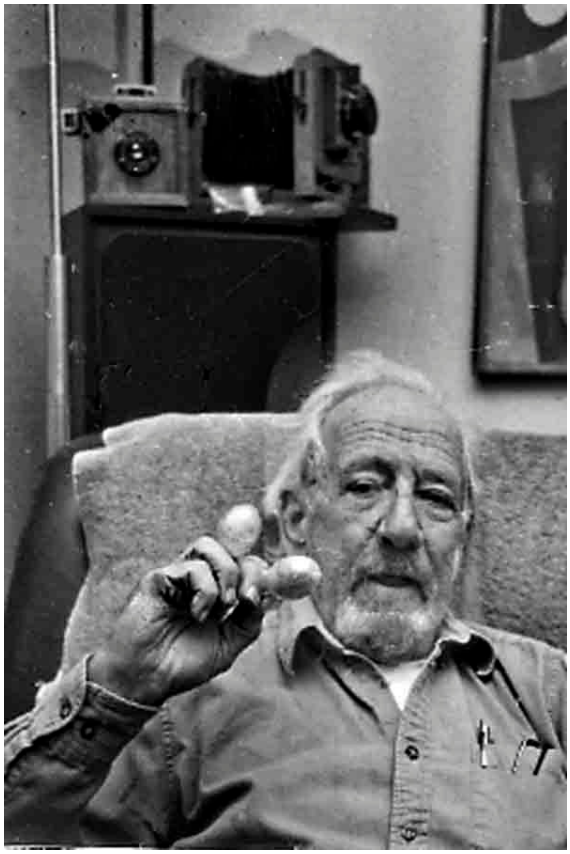


Above^ “Bounced” off ceiling.

The photos here are from Clear #5 flashbulbs. (*There was NO appreciable difference when using the #5B (blue toned bulbs*). (f-11 @ 1/30th ISO= 50)

Being that this Kodak “Bantam” is from the late 1940's the camera did not have a sync-port for electronic flash - I had to use the one on the camera. (*I did not think that I would get correct exposures as I was told by other photographers that the strobe was too fast for the workings of the shutter. Well! OK = I did it anyway.*)

Now the electronic flash unit (Canon 580 EX) Set to “M” @ 1/1:

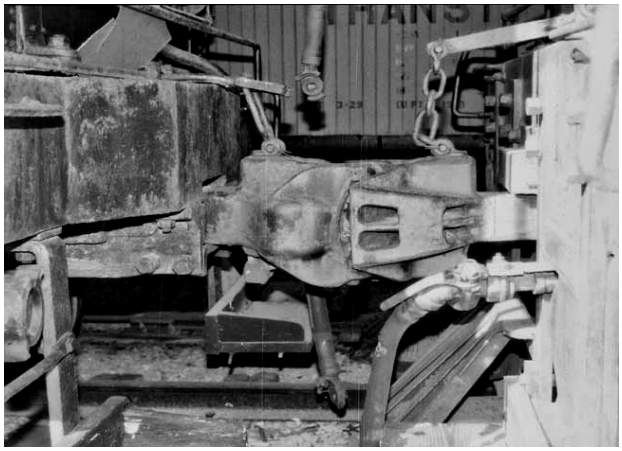


The above photo tests were exposed with a Canon 580 EX strobe flash. f-11 @ 1/30th Sec / ISO= 50. Developed in the same chemicals (And at the same length of time) as the #5 flash bulbs. (Dev.= *Ansco-30/JK reformulated developer* // Water rinse “stop” // Sodium Thiosulphate fixer. Scanned at 300 DPI.)

Well! I was surprised about the outcome of the strobe unit and the almost equal spread of the light - Especially that of the Nighttime shot in the backyard. (Now - What the hell am I going to do with the 6 dozen flashbulbs I have in storage?) They still would be good for the Paper Negative Process, as the strobes are a bit problematic. For me that is. Can not seem to get the strobes to really give the intensity I need for the ISO-3 papers. The #5 Clear bulbs work great.

And Now - for something a little different - “Fill-Flash” With the Canon 580 Strobe....

Being a success always drives me to do other things with anything I am doing. So - Here are the strobe tests for filling in some dark areas.



The above tests were taken under the “Train Shed” at the “National Museum of Transportation”, Saint Louis County, Missouri. The light was rather dim, and a fill-in flash was needed (with any film). The “car-coupling” was in the well lit area out side the shed, however, in a deep shadowed area between the RR cars. So the added fill-flash gave the best light, even though it looks a little “flat” to me (*the flash was attached to the bracket next to the camera*).

(*The 120/220 and the 828 (35mm) roll films use the same lens settings and come out the same between both formats, development is the same, - only the size is the difference.*)

I respectfully suggest that if anyone wishes to do this - make a few tests with your camera - as most shutters, of different age, could be a bit different in the timing between flash BULBS and that of strobes. If the camera you are using has the option of using strobes - hey! Go for it. If not - do a few tests for best shutter speeds. The Kodak “Flash” Bantam seems to work well for strobe flash at f-8 1/30th of a second - using full power of the Canon 580 for the above examples. The distance would be figured by the f-Stops and the strength of the output of the flash unit. (I choose full-power as to mimic the output of the #5 flash bulbs. But the output of the #5 bulbs seemed much brighter than the strobe unit. The negatives looked almost exactly the same.

Good luck with your trials with using X-ray films and a strobe flash. If you more advice - send a private message to me here on Facebook.

Thank you for taking the time to rad this.

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